

## **SD READS**

### **Philosophy**

Every individual deserves the opportunity to have the best possible literacy instruction, that is supported by scientifically based research for optimizing reading achievement, so they are not limited in their performance, ambitions, and goals.

**Vision of SD READS** – Every Child Reads and Writes

### **Mission**

Create a foundation for students to succeed in school and in life through literacy instruction.

### **Goal**

To develop capacity within every school/district for the leadership, support and teaching of literacy and to meet No Child Left Behind requirements.

### **Objectives**

1. Sustain the current 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and Special Education reading initiative.
2. Assist schools in school improvement.
3. Assist Title I schools and those schools eligible for Reading First in research based literacy instruction.
4. Develop literacy instruction developmentally appropriate for kindergarten.
5. Implement grades 4<sup>th</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> research based literacy instruction.
6. Partner with university school of education faculty in the collaborative delivery of literacy instruction for pre-service and in-service teachers.
7. Conduct on-going assessment, evaluation and redesign of the SD READS professional development system on a continual basis.

### **Background Information**

For the past three years the Advanced Reading Enhancement Approach (AREA) has been South Dakota's reading initiative supporting strategic reading – reading as critical to students' success in school. As a professional development system with interdependent components, AREA made it possible for first, second, and third grade and special education teachers to gain a deeper understanding of how students become literate and of instructional practices that motivate students to become engaged life long learners. Teaching is not just a compilation of skills, but high-level intellectual work; therefore, teachers were encouraged to embrace new thinking, employ scientifically based research methods, and refine instructional practices.

## **Description of SD READS**

SD READS is a literacy focused professional development system for K – 5 classroom teachers.

SD READS will incorporate the AREA professional development system, a system that has proven to be effective in improving instructional practices that translate into improved student academic achievement. In an evaluation of AREA conducted by Mid-Continent Research for Education & Learning (McREL) results of SAT 9 subtests related to reading indicated that students whose teachers were trained by AREA perform better than those teachers who were not. Furthermore, students who had two years of exposure to the AREA framework (in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades) performed better than students whose teachers were only in their first year of participation.

As AREA has done, SD READS will engage teachers as learners – learning that includes demonstration, inquiry, reflection and experimentation. The professional development includes specific, defined, clear instructional practices based upon scientific research. Not only will teachers receive explicit, engaging instruction in the Effective Instructional Practices course and Practicum, but they will also benefit from mentoring and coaching in their classrooms. Literacy coaches introduce, describe, and demonstrate instruction and then follow up with coaching in the classroom that may include modeling, team teaching or problem solving around practice. The focus of the classroom collaboration between literacy coaches and teachers is to assist teachers in refining their instructional practices through reflection and teacher self-evaluation.

An important component of the course work and classroom mentoring, and one that all effective professional development must include, is learning assessment techniques that are aligned with new approaches or practices. In SD READS teachers will learn to analyze and use data to inform their instruction. An effective professional development system must incorporate rigorous application of instructional approaches, ways for looking for evidence of student learning, and close observation and monitoring of behavior.

SD READS will expand to include kindergarten and 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades in addition to first, second, and third grade and special education. Teachers of these grades and groups will be involved in professional development that occurs over an entire school year. Thus, students become the primary and ultimate beneficiaries of this professional development system.

The SD READS model will include administrators as recipients of professional development, as well as teachers. Administrators are encouraged to participate in the Effective Instructional Strategies course instruction, quarterly Round Tables or seminars, and school-wide conversations. Through these mediums administrators will have the opportunity to learn and practice their leadership roles in implementing and sustaining an effective professional development system. In addition to administrators becoming more

knowledgeable of effective instructional strategies, they will also be given support in making the professional development system work. It requires time, energy, and commitment.

Parents play a crucial role in their children's success in school and specifically in learning to read. Administrators and teachers have the responsibility of communicating to parents what they are doing in classrooms and schools. To reinforce instructional practices, schools will involve parents in their literacy role by providing home-school connections. SD READS intends to develop a handbook to assist teachers and administrators in providing those connections.

South Dakota teachers will participate in ED 692 Effective Literacy Practices (K-5) for three hours of graduate credit and ED 695 Effective Literacy Practices (K-5) Practicum for one hour of graduate credit. The courses will be offered through the five state universities to in-service teachers. Universities will be encouraged to offer these courses to pre-service teachers, as BHSU has previously done with the AREA courses.

In 2000, the National Reading Panel identified skills central to reading achievement. The panel reviewed research in reading instruction focusing on kindergarten through third grade and identified methods relating to reading success. Their findings focused on five effective components of reading instruction to include: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. The course content for SD READS includes a strong focus on the five areas identified by the panel, as well as, assessment and classroom management in order to teach children skills to learn to effectively read and write.

### **Literacy Framework for SD READS**

- Assessment and how it informs instruction
- Classroom Management
- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics Instruction
- Reading
- Writing

### **National Board Professional Teaching Standards**

As a professional development system the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards establishes high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and do. The National Board's work is guided by five core propositions that state what NBPTS values and believes should be honored in teaching:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

In revising the course work for SD READS, the course objectives are based on the core propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and how those propositions relate to assessment, classroom management, phonemic awareness, phonics, reading, and writing. Teachers may choose to become candidates for Board Certification; however, whether or not they are candidates they will be encouraged to read and reflect on the high level of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and commitments illustrated by the five core propositions.